

Honor America's Veterans on Veterans Day – November 11
Remembering The Defenders of Freedom
By Fourth District Supervisor Gary Ovitt

America's gratitude for the brave souls who fought to preserve our democracy and way of life knows no limits. As we honor their bravery on Veterans Day, we remember the countless sacrifices they made to keep our nation safe, and their valiant work in preserving freedom and democracy around the world.

In a Veterans' Day proclamation, President Bush stated that "America was founded on the principles of liberty, opportunity, and justice for all, and on Veterans Day we recognize the men and women of our Armed Forces who have valiantly defended these values throughout our nation's history."

Veterans' Day is perhaps one of the most important occasions we can celebrate each year. This is the time when we reflect upon the ideals that we treasure as Americans: the basic liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, ethnic, cultural, and political diversity, and economic opportunity for all. Though we often take these freedoms for granted, the thousands of immigrants who reach our shores each year yearning for the American dream understand the importance of freedom.

Defending our country is not just an abstract notion out of a history textbook. Protecting our citizens from harm from a hostile nation means protecting our American values of freedom and democracy. Everyone who values the freedoms and liberties we take for granted should pause on Veterans' Day to thank our friends and loved ones for their sacrifices in defending our right to be free.

President Bush in his 2006 Veterans' Day Proclamation stated: "All of America's veterans have placed our Nation's security before their own lives, creating a debt we can never fully repay. Our veterans represent the best of America, and they deserve the best America can give them."

America's truest heroes are the veterans of war.

Answering the highest call of duty, these loyal men and women have defended our country and aided the advance of democracy throughout the world. They have served in hostile regions far away from the comfort of their homes.

In honor of these heroes, we celebrate Nov. 11 as Veterans Day.

America has more than 25 million veterans. These men and women served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf and the war on terror in all branches of the military.

We have much to learn from these veterans.

They know about unconditional commitment. Without questioning authority, veterans served because of their commitment to duty. They knew their nation counted on them to honor this commitment. When the president, their commander in chief, called them to battle, they took action.

As Sen. John McCain, a highly decorated Vietnam veteran, said: “Glory belongs to the act of being constant to something greater than yourself, to a cause, to your principles, to the people on whom you rely and who rely on you in return.”

Veterans know the definition of tough times and depravation. Often working in deplorable conditions, with their lives constantly in danger, veterans don’t take for granted the uniquely prosperous, free lives we lead in America.

The war experience tests the mettle of the men and women in uniform. Their “soldierly qualities” make them strong, independent people with the ability to weather whatever adversity life dishes out. It is this determination that makes them great leaders in their family, community and workplace when they return to civilian life.

Heeding President John F. Kennedy’s advice, our veterans have given much more to our country than they have asked for in return.

Veterans are an inspiration for all Americans, and it is important to remember them on this solemn day of tribute. I urge you to display, proudly, the American flag at your home and workplace on Nov. 11 to show appreciation and thanks for their unparalleled dedication to our country.